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# University of Montana

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## MEDIA RELEASE

November 4, 1988

### NUMBER OF FEMALE CPAs IN STATE QUADRUPLS, RESEARCHERS SAY IN BBER PUBLICATION

MISSOULA --

Men no longer dominate the accounting field in Montana, according to survey results published in the fall issue of the Montana Business Quarterly. The number of female certified public accountants (CPAs) in the state has quadrupled over the past decade.

The Quarterly is published by the University of Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research.

The study was based on a mail survey of female CPAs in Montana who belonged to the Montana Society of CPAs in 1987. The researchers were Franklin Plewa, Ronald Le Blanc and Ronald Balsley, business professors at Idaho State University.

An increasing number of women throughout the United States and Montana are enrolling in university accounting programs and choosing public accounting as a career, according to national statistics on employment and university enrollment. Those figures show that nearly half the nation's accounting students and CPAs are women.

Although many women in Plewa, Le Blanc and Balsley's survey hold supervisory jobs at accounting firms, their salaries are

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MTCPAs.rl -- 2

among the lowest in the nation for CPAs. Nearly half the women reported that they earned less than \$25,000 in 1987. Only 8 percent of them earned \$40,000 a year. By comparison, 1985 statistics from the American Woman's Society of Certified Public Accountants -- the last year for which national data are available -- show that one-fourth of the accountants nationwide earn more than \$40,000.

The low salaries of female CPAs in Montana might be explained by the women's relatively recent entry into the accounting profession, the researchers say. About 60 percent reported fewer than 10 years in the profession, and only 15 percent said they had more than 14 years of experience.

However, the number of years of experience may not be the only explanation for female CPA's low salaries in the state. The researchers found that "incomes in all professions and other employment categories in Montana lag behind national figures, and that women's incomes in general lag behind men's."

Most of the women surveyed work full time and have a variety of job titles. Of the women in public accounting, nearly two-thirds said they are supervisors. The other third said they are owners of or partners in a firm.

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